

VOX TIME MACHINE & BIG BAD WAH
EFFECTS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE CAUDERY



Vox Time Machine & Big Bad Wah Both £172

We've already had the Satchurator, now Vox and Joe Satriani collaborate on the design of two new pedals *by Trevor Curwen*

After the launch last year of the Satchurator, Joe Satriani's collaboration with Vox continues with the release of two new pedals – the Time Machine delay and the Big Bad Wah. In the tradition of the Satchurator's two different distortion effects in a single pedal, both of the new pedals exhibit a dual functionality that adds to their versatility – the Time Machine offers both 'Modern' and 'Vintage' modes while the Big Bad Wah has two voicings – Wah 1 and Wah 2.

Time Machine

Looking very cool in metallic green with cream chickenhead knobs, the Time Machine aims to put a wide range of delay sounds in a pedal that's easy to use. Key to this are the twin footswitches – one for turning the effect on, the other a tap tempo button for inputting delay times on the fly but also, when held down, for switching between its 'Modern' and 'Vintage' tones. Modern provides pristine digital delay while Vintage aims to emulate the sound of tape-based units by utilising saturation circuitry for mild distortion and modulation to reproduce wow and flutter-induced warbling.

On top of all this, a small toggle switch puts you in either hi-fi or lo-fi mode, effectively giving you four distinct sounding delay voices. The hi-fi mode aims for uncoloured and transparent while lo-fi is designed to apply a distinctive EQ using high-pass and low-pass filters to allow the delay sound to blend-in naturally rather than standing proud in the mix.

The delay time can be set by the central two chickenhead knobs – one a four-way switch to choose the range (0-125, 125-

250, 250-500, 500-1000 ms) of the delay time, the second to set the actual time. Using the knobs you can have up to one second of delay but a max of almost six seconds is available if you use the tap tempo switch. You can also use the tap tempo switch to set the delay as triplets, eighth notes, dotted eighth notes, or quarter notes depending on the delay range position setting.

Level and feedback knobs respectively set the volume and number of repeats, and dry and effected outputs are available should you wish to use the pedal in stereo rather than the usual mono.

Sounds

Practicality is what first comes to mind when using the Time Machine – those chickenhead knobs will certainly show up brightly on a dim stage and, with their sharp pointy end aligned to white chinagraph pencil markings or some carefully applied masking tape,

will make it dead easy to quickly and accurately recall favourite settings. The tap tempo facility will also quickly let you get your delays sync'd to whatever tempo your drummer happens to choose.

If it's pristine digital delays that you want, this unit will do it, but there's also the option of emulating the sounds of BBD analogue delays and tape-based units. To this end the Vintage mode offers a subtle but effective change in the flavour of the repeats – blurring their edges somewhat – while the lo-fi switch removes top and bottom, decreasing their bandwidth for a delay that blends wonderfully in the mix with the dry guitar sound.

Big Bad Wah

The Big Bad Wah activates in the traditional wah pedal fashion with a push on the top of the treadle working the switch underneath. But there are a whole bunch of other controls on the base to the right

The rivals

Time Machine

The forthcoming **DigiTech Time Bender** (£299) has loads of hi-tech features such as setting repeats based on a strumming pattern and adding intelligent harmonies on the repeats. The **TC Electronic Nova Delay** (£179) offers a range of delay types plus tap tempo. Somewhat simpler but with a great sound is the analogue **MXR Carbon Copy** (£219).

of the treadle, the main one being the footswitch that selects Wah 1 or Wah 2. Wah 1 is designed to provide the classic traditional Vox wah-wah sound that Vox now calls the "UK sound", while Wah 2 is customisable with some added adjustable parameters that can offer a more aggressive tone. There are two 'voices', selected by a small toggle switch available for Wah 2. One voice offers a traditional wah while the other is designed to provide a darker sound reminiscent of a talk box. Wah 2 can also add a boost to your sound when kicked in. The chickenhead 'drive' knob set at its minimum will provide the same amount of gain as Wah 1 but can add up to 10dB of gain so that Wah 2 can be louder than Wah 1 and can be used as a boost for solos.



The Time Machine has almost six seconds of delay available

A further tonal twist is added by the fact that the Big Bad Wah features two inductors in its circuitry. You can choose a UK- or a US-style inductor.

Sounds

The treadle on the Big Bad Wah has a nice positive feel and will easily stay wedged in one position should you wish it. Wah 1 offers a sweet vintage wow sound with a sensible bass to treble range that doesn't get too extreme at either end. Wah aficionados will know that the type of inductor used has always been at the heart of the sound and the UK-style inductor contributes to that original late-sixties vibe, while engaging the US-style inductor yields a punchier sound that is more strident in the top-end.


With its voice switch in its normal position and the boost at minimum, Wah 2 offers the same as Wah 1 but winding up the boost makes it louder – useful for kicking your amp up a notch and providing a naturally more aggressive sound in contrast. With the voice switch engaged, the pedal gets more vocal in the mid-range, spitting out chewy vowel sounds that combine well with fuzz.

Verdict

The Time Machine is not remarkably different in scope from other delays on the market that pertain to offer both digital and analogue-style tones, but it provides access to its facilities in an uncomplicated way that makes it a practical stage tool. The extra width that the Big

Bad Wah will take up on your pedalboard compared to many other wahs is certainly worth it for the flexibility of having two different voiced effects constantly available. It's that classic wah you've always wanted but with its unruly twin along for the ride.

Joe Satriani's style may not be everyone's cup of tea but what's not in doubt is that he is extremely experienced in both playing and performing and that experience has positively informed the design of these pedals, endowing them with a set of practical features that should have universal appeal in a number of genres.

You don't have to be a Satriani fan to like these – even Coldplay might like them... 

The Bottom Line

Time Machine

We liked: Easily set chickenhead knobs; lo-fi mode; tap tempo
We dislike: Flimsy battery compartment cover
Guitarist says: A practical delay pedal with neat sounds

Big Bad Wah

We like: Two switchable wahs; two inductors; signal boosting ability
We dislike: Flimsy battery compartment cover
Guitarist says: Increases flexibility with two different wahs at the flick of a switch



Vox Time Machine

PRICE: £172
ORIGIN: Japan
TYPE: Digital delay pedal
MAX DELAY TIME: 5800 milliseconds via tap tempo, 1000 milliseconds via delay control
CONTROLS: Level, delay range, time, feedback, on/off footswitch, tap & Modern/Vintage footswitch, hi-fi/lo-fi switch
CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm input and output, plus dry output
POWER: 9V alkaline battery (supplied). A Korg KA186 power adaptor can be ordered direct from Vox on the below number at £17.12 inc delivery
DIMENSIONS: 143 (w) x 121 (d) x 58mm (h)
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 0.6/1.32 (without batteries)
OPTIONS: AC adaptor
RANGE OPTIONS: The Satchurator costs £110
Vox 01908 857100
www.voxamps.com

Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★



Vox Big Bad Wah

PRICE: £172
ORIGIN: Japan
TYPE: Wah wah pedal
CONTROLS: Drive knob, Voice toggle switch, Inductor switch, Wah 1-2 footswitch, on/off footswitch under treadle
CONNECTIONS: 6.4mm input and output
POWER: 9V alkaline battery (supplied) or AC adaptor (sold separately)
DIMENSIONS: 130 (w) x 253 (d) x 78 (h) mm
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 1.2/2.65 (without battery)
OPTIONS: A Korg KA186 power adaptor can be ordered direct from Vox at £17.12 inc delivery
RANGE OPTIONS: Satchurator £110



Test results

Build quality	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★

The rivals

Big Bad Wah

The **MXR Eddie Van Halen Wah** (£269) is another pedal made to a famous player's specs but has just a single voice. If you want a range of sounds from your wah, the **BOSS PW-10 V-Wah** (£149) is a programmable modelling wah with instant access to six classic and modern wah pedal sounds plus other features. The **Ibanez WD7 Weeping Demon** (£129) lets you fine-tune the range of its wah.



The Big Bad Wah's voice switch gives the pedal a more vocal tone